

DOCKET NO.: PLBA-0005 (11407)
Application No.: 09/857,326
Office Action Dated: January 12, 2005

**PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116**

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is requested. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-16 are pending in the application. In this response and amendment, claim 1 is amended, claim 5 is canceled, and claims 15 and 16 are added.

In the final office action dated January 12, 2005, the examiner rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nicely (US Patent No. 3,565,127) in view of Waters (US Patent No. 3,577,873). The examiner allows claims 7-14, and objects to claims 4-6 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would find these claims allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter noted as allowable in dependent claim 5. Accordingly, applicant has canceled dependent claim 5. Applicant has added independent claims 15 and 16, which essentially are independent claim 1 with the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 4 and 6, respectively.

Applicant requests entry of the above amendments solely to expedite prosecution of the application. Applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's rejections of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nicely (US Patent No. 3,565,127) in view of Waters (US Patent No. 3,577,873). Applicant asserts that the above amendments place the application in condition for allowance, thereby providing that this amendment be entered after final.

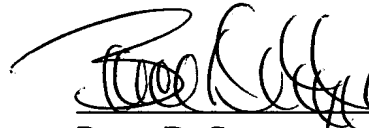
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CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicant submits that pending claims 1-16 are allowable and requests that examiner issue an early notice of allowance. The examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney in the event that a telephone interview will advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce D. George", is written over a horizontal line.

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Date: March 9, 2005

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